



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services**

State Consumer and Family Advisory Committee

Advocacy and Customer Service Section

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Dempsey Benton, Secretary

Michael S. Lancaster, M.D. and
Leza Wainwright, Directors
Carl Britton-Watkins, Chairperson

May 8, 2008

Dear Secretary Benton

The State Consumer and Family Member Advisory Committee would like to express our appreciation and support for the efforts that you are making to improve services to those clients with MH/DD/SA challenges. We have some idea as to how difficult the task is that you have been asked to do. We understand how important it is that you be successful.

We have read the Mercer report and are grateful for this initiative. In this report some changes in structure were suggested which you appear to have incorporated in your *Proposal for Voluntary Regionalization of LMEs*. We applaud your effort to reduce duplication of management and for suggesting a simplification of process for providers and consumers. Your proposal suggesting regional LMEs appears to have significant advantages while holding LMEs and Regional Entities to appropriate behavioral health and financial management standards. We are encouraged by the possibility of permitting LMEs to provide limited direct care with the permission of the Secretary. The proposal would require more accountability while providing for economies of scale and still allow local implementation. Generally speaking, it appears that the best model is to have single point, top down management with local or regional implementation. The only concern that we have is that this is another major change. At some point a system like this needs stability.

We understand that providing services is very complex involving many consumers and stakeholders. Those involved from a leadership perspective include the Secretary, the Legislature, the LOC, the Division, the LMEs and the local county government structure. We would like to encourage you to continue working for clear definitions of assignments and responsibilities that are consistent with the authority given to these stakeholders relative to implementation with continued consumer and family input.

Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the MH/DD/SA consumers and their families.

Sincerely,

The State Consumer and Family Member Advisory Committee - SCFAC

cc: Verla Insko
Martin Nesbit
Division of MH/DD/SAS Executive Leadership Team



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